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## THE EDITOR'S DIARY.

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MONDAY, *September 24.*

The Necessity of Woman Suffrage.

WE are convinced that the time has arrived when the welfare of the Nation would be most effectually conserved by conferring upon women the privilege of voting and holding political office. The claim of leaders of the cause that the franchise should be granted because of a presumed inherent right we cannot admit. Whether or not in strict conformity with purely ethical considerations, it is nevertheless a fact of surpassing moment that, since the world began, the possession of power has depended upon ability to acquire and hold it. Practically, there has been no change in this regard, certainly since the German barons took possession of the valley of the Rhine; and, theoretically, custom of long prevalence often confers authority equal to that of written law. Man himself is not permitted in this country to vote except in compliance with arbitrary regulations, which universally disfranchise him until he reaches the age of twenty-one, and frequently during his entire lifetime.

Advocates of the change only weaken their case by resting it upon the untenable proposition that the action of the founders of the Republic in restricting suffrage to their own sex was immoral. Nor do they strengthen it by insisting that the policy was unwise. The women of a century, or even half a century, ago were notoriously unfitted for the performance of political acts. They possessed neither of the requisites—education and experience.

But mighty progress began with the recognition of mental alertness as the chief ingredient of real attractiveness in women and was greatly enhanced by the sense of responsibility aroused by their acquirement of rights in property. To-day we are satisfied that the intellectual equipment of the average American woman is quite equal to that of the medial man. Morally, it is

admitted, she is his superior, and therein lies the basis of our conviction that as a matter, not of right, but of policy, she should be taken into full political partnership.

The three evils most menacing to the country to-day are (1) debasement of moral standards in politics and business, (2) absorption by a few, at unwarranted cost to the many, of the common wealth, and (3) unreasonable and violent expression of resentment by the multitude. With each of these perils the American woman is quite as competent to cope as the American man. That she would be less tolerant of moral deficiency in a candidate for public office requires no demonstration; that, as a careful householder and ambitious mother constantly practising economies for the advancement of her children, she would take an active part in restraining monopolies from adding undue profits to the cost of general living seems evident; that her keen personal interest in the preservation and protection of homes and property would inevitably constitute her a conservative balance against the increasing horde of foreign-born voters may also, we submit, be accepted as a certainty.

The time for the effective use of the once-sound objection that she would not exercise the privilege, we believe, is past. Until recently, the necessity for woman's influence in politics has not been apparent; it is now, and it will become increasingly so during the next few years. It is true, doubtless, that at the moment the average woman is not adequately equipped with information respecting public affairs; but may not this be due chiefly to the absence of occasion for its acquirement? Moreover, is it certain that she is not even now as well qualified, at least, as the average unit in the great mass of American voters? And, at the very worst, would not her mere instinct afford a guide wiser and safer than the sordid motives which now actuate so great a proportion of the electorate?

For the purposes, therefore, of purifying the ballot, of establishing and maintaining lofty standards as to the qualifications required of candidates for public office, of effecting an even distribution of earnings, of providing a heavier balance of disinterestedness and conservatism against greed and radicalism, we reiterate the expression of our firm belief that universal suffrage has now become, not only desirable, but almost a paramount necessity.

TUESDAY, *September 25.*      Of Sleeping, Dreaming and Snoring.

CONSIDERING the fact that a person living the allotted period passes fully twenty years in bed, it is questionable whether sleep engages its just proportion of the attention of mankind. Attempts to diagnose sleep, so to speak, have been singularly futile. Why one person finds it easy to drop into normal unconsciousness almost at will, while another, of apparently similar physical condition, strives in vain for repose, is a problem that still continues to baffle scientific inquiry. That sleep of itself is a boon of inestimable value we all know, and yet the precise duration producing the greatest benefit has not been even approximately determined. The Duke of Wellington's famous prescription of six hours for a man, seven for a woman and eight for a fool has just been formally repudiated by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. A series of experiments upon representatives of the three classes convinced the learned men that the allowance in each case was too small. Further than this, however, they conservatively forbore to commit themselves. They would not even go on record as to the necessity of dividing humankind into classes at all.

Experience seems to indicate that nature decrees a longer period of unconsciousness for the young than for the old, but it is by no means certain that the successful training of the will to induce longer periods of recuperative repose would not prolong life. An experiment of one of the British professors bears directly upon this notion. He had prepared several arithmetical problems, equally difficult of solution. Then he arranged to be awakened after having slept half an hour at one time, an hour at another, and so on. He found as a result that his mental condition was quite as effective in application to mathematics after sleep of half an hour, as it was after that of several hours. But similar experiment, designed to test his memory, definitely established the fact that power of recollection grew in proportion to the duration of mental rest. It may be, therefore, that the pathetic loss of memory by old people is due to too little sleep. If so, there is no doubt that a remedy could be obtained through the exercise of will power in changing the habit. The familiar theory that one hour of sleep before midnight is more beneficial than twice as much after midnight seems readily confirmed in practice, and yet, so far as we are informed, nobody has taken the trouble to carry this idea to

its logical conclusion, and regularly retire at dusk and rise before dawn.

There certainly is good reason to suspect that our entire general method of living, so far as differentiation of waking and sleeping hours is concerned, is wrong, but it does not seem as yet to have occurred to the learned men to make the simple experiments requisite to the acquirement of exact knowledge. Any one, of course, can do it to his own satisfaction, but the individual result of an unscientific test would be far from conclusive. An effort by one of our own societies to determine whether there may not be in this simple revolution of hours a universal panacea for American nerves, would seem to be in order. We should not, of course, anticipate any immediate effect, whatever the result of such experimentation, because human nature is obstinate, and long evenings by the fireside are notoriously agreeable. One effect, generally considered highly desirable, we suspect would be certain. Almost surely such sleep would be less dreamful, and, consequently, according to both the learned men and experience, more restful physically and more recuperative mentally. But here again practice would encounter the serious obstacle of disinclination. Dreaming either by day or by night is one of the greatest of luxuries. It is not, of course, a physical necessity, since we all know many persons who never dream at all, and yet continue to be exasperatingly healthful. But observation teaches us that such persons invariably are most uninteresting. They may and often do possess in a notable degree sweetness of disposition, but they are so devoid of imagination as to be out of touch with the fantasies of existence.

We should, therefore, strongly encourage the cultivation of the habit of dreaming; not, however, to the limit of demanding expression through snoring, which to us has ever seemed a reprehensible practice and a just cause for divorce. Excuse upon the ground of unpreventability is absurd. If snoring were merely an obnoxious utterance of unconscious emotions, it might be woefully endured, but in fact it is a purely physical manifestation of the effect of excessive indulgence in food and drink, or of ignorance of good form in recumbency. We may conclude generally that "early to bed, early to rise," continues to produce the beneficial effects accorded by tradition to the habit, and that less turning of night into day would add materially to the sum of human happiness.

WEDNESDAY, *September 26.*

Of Honesty in Advertising.

THAT advertising pays is a fact now generally recognized; but it is still an open question whether truthful advertisements produce results equal to those of announcements which, if not quite deceitful, are nevertheless obvious exaggerations. The first exponent of paid-for publicity on a large scale was a famous manager of circuses to whom was accredited the cynical observation that "the American people love to be humbugged." It is a significant fact, however, that the practice of that able showman did not conform to his precept, and that the continuance of his success was really due to the excellence of his productions. Doubtless, he was as well aware of this truth as anybody else, and merely chuckled over the additional advertising obtained at no cost, through a witty observation that could not fail to appeal to the American sense of humor. Second only to the showman in using what seemed to be a daring innovation, was the publisher of a story-paper, who, also, always gave more than he promised.

Not a few ambitious emulators of these pioneers mistook the true cause of their successes and endeavored to achieve similar benefits by mere pronouncements, without regard to accuracy. But it did not take long, for merchants especially, to discover that lasting gain could not be obtained in this manner, and year by year they have become more heedful of the injunction that, irrespective of its inherent merit, honesty is the best policy. It is, therefore, a curious and interesting fact that, of those who are still convinced of the efficacy of the apparently mistaken notion that gross exaggeration is essential to attracting public attention, the most conspicuous are themselves purveyors of advertising. An example before us is the prospectus of a comparatively new periodical, which, we are informed by the enthusiastic publisher, "is not only an unprecedented success," but "has at once taken a position in the front line." Curiously enough, so simple a method as reducing its price enabled it to immediately "strike the key-note of success," which it is sure to maintain because "probably never before has there been such a list of prominent writers of world-wide reputation engaged by a single publisher." In conclusive confirmation of these broad assertions, the publisher submits the expert opinion of a distinguished statesman—whose books, incidentally, he prints—to the effect that "it is by a long shot best of all the August magazines."

Now, each of these assertions is untrue and known to be untrue, not only by the publisher responsible for them, but probably even by the kindly disposed statesman, and surely by the experienced reader. If, by chance, there should be a person sufficiently credulous to make an experimental purchase only to find that he had been deceived, what, we wonder, is the effect upon his mind anticipated by the publisher? Probably that, while recognizing the artifice, he might nevertheless be convinced that the product was really worth the smaller purchase price required and that he would continue to be a customer. The chief aim, however, we suspect to be to get his attention at all hazards, by whatever method.

This is only a minor illustration of a practice which seems reprehensible and is becoming rather more general. Publishers of books, for example, have discovered, or think they have discovered, that an effective inducement to a prospective purchaser is the knowledge that many persons have bought and presumably read with delight the offered product. Hence the frequency of announcements to the effect that so many thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of copies of a certain book, usually a novel, have been sold or at least printed. We do not doubt that some reputable houses are scrupulously exact in making such statements; but, in the majority of cases, the figures present a woful exaggeration. We have too much respect for the intelligence of the American public to believe that they are regarded seriously, and yet their presentation must have some effect or publishers would not persist in the usage.

So, too, in respect to the circulation claimed for periodicals. False claims are the rule rather than otherwise. We know a publisher who refuses to make any statement whatever, simply because he has a prejudice against misrepresentation and his chief competitor has not. He does not consider it a part of his duty to challenge the assertion of another, even though he knows it to be false. Consequently, although certain that many thousand more copies of his periodical are sold than of his competitor's, he is obliged to require the prospective customer to convince himself of the fact unaided. We doubt if he suffers material loss of desirable trade by reason of his attitude, and yet the predicament is surely awkward and ought not to be. At times we have secretly hoped that some of our professional reformers would attack the problem and effect a wholesome change, but this is

probably too much to ask, or even dream of, since their own vehicles of expression are as a rule the worst offenders. After all, experience has convinced us that the quality of a publication itself is usually a sufficient guarantee of its popularity among people whose attention is worth having, and that heedfulness of exactitude in the advertising of wares is, in the long run, both politic and profitable.

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THURSDAY, *September 27.* England, the United States and Cuba.

THERE has just come to light an official letter addressed by Lord Palmerston, when Prime Minister of Great Britain, to Charles Francis Adams, our representative at the Court of St. James's during the Civil War, which possesses a peculiar interest at this time. It is dated June 30, 1862, and reads in part as follows:

"I desire now, through you, to say a word of solemn warning to your people, whose earnest well-wisher I am. For eighty-four years the United States has been in a condition of internal peace and of steadily growing prosperity. For seventy-six years this peace and prosperity have obtained under her own independent government. Her peace, prosperity and independence are now menaced, for of all possible evils that can befall the United States the worst is the evil of anarchy into which civil war and revolutionary disturbances will assuredly throw her. Whoever is responsible for armed revolution and outrage, whoever is responsible in any way for the condition of the affairs that now obtains, is an enemy of the United States, and doubly heavy is the responsibility of the man who, affecting to be the especial champion of United States independence, takes any step which will jeopardize that independence. For there is just one way in which American independence can be secured, and that is for the American people to show their ability to continue in their path of peaceful and orderly progress. This nation asks nothing of the United States save that it shall continue to develop as it has developed during the past eighty-four years, that it shall know and practise the orderly liberty which will assuredly bring an ever-increasing measure of peace and prosperity. Our intervention in United States affairs will only come if the United States herself shows that she has fallen into the insurrectionary habit, that she lacks the self-restraint necessary to peaceful self-government and that her contending factions have plunged the country into anarchy.

I solemnly adjure all American patriots to band together to sink all differences and personal ambitions, and to remember that the only way that they can preserve the independence of the republic is to prevent the necessity of outside interference by rescuing it from the anarchy of civil war. I earnestly hope that this word of adjuration of mine, given



in the name of the British people, the staunchest friends and well-wishers of the United States that there are in all the world, will be taken as it is meant, will be seriously considered and will be acted upon, and if so acted upon America's permanent independence and her permanent success as a republic are assured."

The communication, although ostensibly of a personal nature, was apparently intended for President Lincoln after the battle of Bull Run, but it never reached him. Whether it was suppressed by Mr. Adams or, as some believe, by Queen Victoria before it could be despatched to the embassy is undetermined. Indeed, it may be a spurious composition altogether, though there seem to be internal evidences of genuineness. Speculation upon what might have happened if the letter had reached President Lincoln would now, of course, be idle; but there can be no doubt that the consequences would have been far-reaching. Its singular interest at this time lies in the fact that a more precise statement of our attitude towards Cuba could not be penned. It is even more exact, though less explicit, than President Roosevelt's warning through the Cuban minister to President Palma.

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FRIDAY, *September 28.*

Of Editors and their Critics.

IT is not uncommon to hear unappreciated genius speak up, especially with sarcastic reference to the "intellectual pretensions" of editors of magazines whose business it is to choose from many stories submitted a few for publication. Formerly, disappointed authors were prone to accuse these unfortunate judges of forming a ring around personal favorites; but gradually this accusation has yielded to recognition of the inevitable effect of keener competition. It is found necessary now, therefore, to convict the entire body of incompetency, and mere numerical enlargement has made this almost as difficult as to indict a whole people. Still, it may be done, if an anonymous correspondent of a conspicuous newspaper be believed and his deduction be accepted.

It seems that a casual discussion with a "non-literary friend" led to the making of a test—"one perhaps of questionable propriety, but nevertheless a test, and a relentless one," namely: "One of Kipling's most popular short stories was selected. The environment of the tale was English, but as the story depended little on local color the scene was easily transferred to America.

An entire change of names of characters was accomplished after considerable mental effort. Aside from this, I give my word of honor not a paragraph, a line, a word or a punctuation was changed." The manuscript so prepared was typewritten and sent to sixteen periodicals, comprising, of the first class, "Harper's," "The Century," and "Scribner's." Each of the sixteen editors declined the story, with the stereotyped form of thanks. "Finally, to make the position of the undiscerning publishers superlatively ridiculous, the manuscript was forwarded to Kipling's original publishers of the story. After an interval of about seven weeks we received a letter containing a check and acceptance. The check was returned by us, with the explanation that the story was to be amplified into a novel, and in due time we received our manuscript back. This experience is as true as the result was preposterous, and is a commentary and a reflection on somebody's intellectual pretensions—upon whose we will leave it for the public to decide."

To the writer, and doubtless to his non-literary friend, the result of this stupid fraud seems conclusive. Really, it is scarcely even indicative. We have no means of ascertaining the precise reasons why each of the sixteen editors returned the manuscript, but we do happen to know the cause of two rejections. It was sufficient for one editor, for example, to recall that he had declined the story when submitted originally by Mr. Kipling's representative. To another it was a matter of weary routine. Each month brings to his desk so many meritorious stories and articles which, on the presumption that they have been forgotten, some witless investigator, prying into the ways of the literary world, has doctored in a similar manner, that long ago he ceased to rebuke or invite any controversy whatsoever with the dishonest sender.

If the equally censurable maker of this "test" gave his true name, he may rest assured that it has found its proper place upon more than one well-laden blacklist. He, however, was probably more cautious than his prototype who called in person upon a certain editor of the "Atlantic Monthly" of the name of William Dean Howells, and, producing a poem and courteous note of declination, indignantly demanded an explanation. "Do you mean to intimate that this is not a good poem?" he challenged. "By no means," hastily remonstrated Mr. Howells; "I think it

is very good indeed." "Then why"—in a somewhat mollified tone—"do you decline it? I consider it the best I have ever written." "Ah, well," said Mr. Howells, "after all, we have very few differences of opinion. Do you know," he added in his gentlest voice, "I have long regarded it as the best that Tennyson has ever written."

But it was the purpose of our smacking inquirer "to make the position of the undiscerning publishers superlatively ridiculous," and he flatters himself that he succeeded when he won acceptance and a check from the publishers of the original story by Kipling. He may, therefore, be justified in claiming that he has brought "a reflection upon the intellectual pretensions" of one out of sixteen editors by demonstrating his ignorance or lapse of memory. Further than that he seems only to have convicted himself and his non-literary friend of moral perversion in having practised gross deception, to the possible injury of an innocent person, and of pitiful cowardice in hiding behind anonymity.

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SATURDAY, *September 29.*

Should Waiters Wear Beards?

WORD comes from Rome to the effect that the Waiters' Union of the Eternal City has decreed that hereafter each member shall wear a beard. The brief news paragraph bearing this interesting information does not contain the various "whereases" which undoubtedly preceded and stated the reasons for the resolution, but undoubtedly the action was a revolt against the indication of servitude. In taking this view the waiters had a precedent of long standing, since, according to Tacitus, even the ancient Germans regarded a clean-shaven face as a sign of menial occupation.

In the eyes of our Biblical forebears, the beard was almost sacred, and it was so universally worn that the great lawgiver, instead of proscribing the use of the razor, forbade the chosen people to "mar" so much as the "corners of their beards." Also when Hanun wished to humiliate David's messengers, he shaved one side of their faces, and when they returned to their master they were obliged to become social recluses until their hair should grow again. In more modern times customs have varied widely. The fantastic trimming into formal shapes corresponding to old-fashioned box-hedges began during Elizabeth's reign, and has continued to a greater or less degree to the present day. In England now a gentleman is supposed to wear a mustache, and

until comparatively recently the growth of one was the first ambition of the youth of this country. It is hardly ten years since the American usage changed, but the revolution was so complete, when it did arrive, that nowadays young men are almost invariably clean-shaven, and their elders are gradually yielding to the new fashion.

Why the absence of a beard was regarded by the Germans as a sign of servitude is not recorded, but in recent times the custom, as applied especially to waiters, undoubtedly had its origin in regard for neat and cleanly appearance. Mere contemplation of flowing beards in proximity to plates of soup would seem to indicate sufficient ground for the present arrangement to justify its continuance. Hairdressers have certain, though unsatisfying, excuse for utilizing their beards as convenient receptacles for their various combs, but a waiter has no such practical extenuation. In fact, the modern germ theory alone probably would suffice to deprive him of the privilege. Moreover, as we have pointed out, in this country the clean-shaven face is no longer a sign of servitude, but rather an evidence of freedom from blemish. There is also a growing indisposition on the part of those who do actually serve to resent the recognized signs of their occupation.

We question whether ever again the beard or mustache will become popular. After all, women make fashions for men as well as for themselves, and the ticklishness inseparable from a growth of wiry hair in the vicinity of the lips, we are informed, has become in their view obnoxious. If it be true, then, as we suspect it is, that the chief purpose of American men is to gratify those whom they are pleased to idealize, no general response to the movement inaugurated in the Eternal City need be anticipated here.

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MONDAY, *October 1.*

The Hearst Force in the Scales.

"ON one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith; on the other is a demagogue, ranting about the tyranny of the capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage while thousands of honest folk are in want of necessities." These are not our words depicting the present political situation in the State of New York; they appear in a letter addressed to an American in 1857 by Thomas Babington Macaulay, and were meant to be prophetic of a condi-

tion sure, in the judgment of the famous essayist, to arise in this country. Foreseeing periods of industrial depression and general adversity, he searchingly inquired:

"Through such seasons the United States will have to pass in the course of the next century, if not of this. How will you pass through them? I heartily wish you good deliverance; but my reason and my wishes are at war, and I cannot help foreboding the worst. It is quite plain that your government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For, with you, the majority is the government, and has the rich, who are always in the minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when, in the State of New York, a multitude of people, none of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of a Legislature will be chosen? . . . Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by a workman who hears his children cry for bread?

"I seriously apprehend you will, in some such season of adversity as I have described, do things that will prevent prosperity from returning; that you will act like people who should, in a season of scarcity, devour all the seed-corn, and thus make the next year not one of scarcity, but of absolute famine.

"There will be, I fear, spoliation. The spoliation will increase the distress. The distress will produce fresh spoliation. There is nothing to stop you. Your constitution is all sail and no anchor. As I said before, when a society has entered on its downward progress, either civilization or liberty must perish. Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand or your republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth."

Undoubtedly, our present plight is that set down with notable precision by the historian in the opening sentence. We have on the one side the "statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith," and on the other the ranting demagogue appealing to envy. There is no question of principle such as is usually involved in political controversies, no issue in respect to public policy or methods of governance, no call for wise determination of disputed theories—only the ferocious onslaught of a mob foreseen by Macaulay as constituting the final issue of popular government. The ordeal is not pleasant, but it was inevitable and may be undergone with at least the comforting reflection that a time more favorable in the eyes of believers in democracy could not have been chosen.

It is, indeed, a fortuitous circumstance that one cause of the

uprising is unexampled prosperity rather than the adversity anticipated by the historian. The people are not in the position of their prototypes, notably in France, who had nothing to lose and therefore everything to gain. General contentment, in fact, would prevail but for the fomentation of a covetous spirit by an evil force, whose progress has been accelerated by the stupidity characteristic of greed and manifest in ostentation. Deprived of the solid foundation of an almost universal revolt against the exercise of monopoly privilege for private profit, the present appeal to passion would have fallen upon deaf ears. Bribery, coercion, effrontery, intrigue, deceit, braggadocio and brutality are effective weapons, but not sufficient in themselves to plunge a great city into political chaos and effect the assassination of a time-honored National organization. Not the depraved alone have abetted the malign influence; only last year thousands of good citizens lent furtive aid at the polls in order to emphasize their demand for reform of present practices.

It is our belief that this determining element will go no further along the hateful road. The nauseating effect of mere contemplation of association with the creatures branded by each other as "thugs," "criminals," "blackmailers," "brothel-keepers" and "thieves," who kissed the rod at Buffalo, should prove an adequate deterrent. Even so, if the Republican party had failed to place in nomination a genuine reformer, of personal independence, recognized probity, proven capacity and utter fearlessness, the doubt and the menace would have remained. Fortunately, leadership prevailed over bossism. Honest men need no longer feel the necessity of using an evil force as a club, and the issue is clearly drawn between honor and ignominy, between credit and disgrace.

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TUESDAY, *October 2.*

Reform of a Great Commonwealth.

It is refreshing, indeed, to turn from enforced consideration of the wretched political conditions of New York to appreciation of the vivid account of the redemption of Pennsylvania related in this REVIEW by Mr. Wayne Mac Veagh. The Quaker State and, more poignantly, the Quaker City, have been so long associated in our minds with all that is sordid and corrupt that expectation or even hope of the dawn of a better day seemed chimerical. But now we are gladdened by the testimony of this veteran observer that deliverance has been achieved. It was a feat made possible

only by the passing away of the master minds of political depravity that dominated the great commonwealth for so many years. Even more gratifying than the realization itself is the method of accomplishment. There was no resort to demagogic appeals, no pandering to vicious passions, no general excoiation of all persons in authority. The citizens of Pennsylvania were aroused by disinterested, patriotic men and a fearless, yet self-respecting, press to an unhappy sense of their deplorable political state, and forthwith they set to work, soberly and discriminatingly, but sternly and unremittingly, to effectuate a remedy. We were aware that they were making progress; but we had no comprehension of the completeness of their success until Mr. Mac Veagh set down the notable results. It is fitting that he, the first citizen of the State and the most courageous and efficient of public servants, whether in official position or in private life, should have been the one to make the record. There is a touch of pathos in his closing reference to the fact that "these great reforms have come too late to be of service to many of the veteran fighters in the cause of honest politics"; but to him, the leader of the righteous movement, we know that the consummation is in very truth full recompense. Well may his neighbors and helpers join with this honored man, in the ripeness of his years, in "reverently thanking God," not only for what has been accomplished, but also for the truly American way in which the good work was done.

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WEDNESDAY, October 3. Conventional or Unconventional Morality.

We have received the following interesting letter:

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW':

"Sir,—I have just read your comment upon my review of 'Helena Richie.'

"There is a point that I am obliged to reply to, and beg you to give me space to do so. You say: 'That restive spirits should chafe at the conventional morality we can understand because there are and in the nature of things can be no other morals. To advocate unconventionality in morals is to uphold immorality itself.' I know that in making that statement you are radically mistaken. My Lord and Master, and yours, was Himself crucified because of unconventional morality. During His mission, He constantly said to the people, 'It has been said unto you,' or 'you have heard,' or 'you have been taught,' which is equivalent to 'conventional morality says,'—but 'I say unto you,' and then He gave a different and a higher command. Again He said,

Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees [the conventional folk of that day], ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' His ideal of morality was so far above conventional morality that even now, after two thousand years (and some strides have been made in that time), it is still looked upon as theoretically beautiful but practically impossible. I can myself conceive of nothing more unconventional than a consistent Christian. How many of us, for example, live up to the injunction given to the young man in the episode you quote in your Diary for September 21st, that we sell all that we have and give to the poor, and yet that was definitely the Christian injunction if we wished to be perfect. How many of us avoid riches that we may be more nearly within reach of the Kingdom of Heaven? It would be most unconventional to do so. We are not, even, like the young man in the Gospel, for his 'heart was heavy,' while most of us conventionally rejoice in such riches as we can scrape together. Whereas Christ told us (and I speak of Him as the Head and Fountain of morality) that His call was to such as felt the burden of sin; that His disciples should be known as bearing a cross and as despised and rejected of men. But surely it is unconventional to be despised and rejected! Christ Himself ate with publicans and sinners, healed on the Sabbath day, defended His disciples for not fasting, sanctified sorrow and repentance and forgiveness (none of these are conventional virtues!), although, for that matter, long before Christ's coming, it was authoritatively said: 'Because thou hast rent thy clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.'

"It was on account of unconventional morality that Socrates was invited to drink hemlock. 'I do nothing,' he said, 'but go about exhorting you to virtue,' but the habit was so unconventional as to be highly annoying to the good Athenians, who did not care any more than people do to-day for too many searching questions into the nature of true goodness.

"St. Francis of Assisi was converted in so unconventional a way as to bring down upon his head the curses of his father, the reproaches of his mother and a stoning by his townspeople, but he continued throughout his whole career an unremitting battle against the conventional morality of his day. It was for unconventional ideals or truths that Bruno, Galileo, Savonarola all suffered, but once one begins to name the great unconventional folk we are encompassed by a cloud of witnesses, and I think you must see that as there is a step below conventionality, which is lawlessness, so also there are many steps above it, and that to advocate unconventionality is *not* to uphold immorality. Discontent may mean a desire for higher things as well as a desire for lower.

"As to 'Helena Richie,' it is difficult to know the exact meed of praise to give a new book by a popular author. I see one critical journal proclaims this novel 'a perfect book.' I should be conscientiously unable to say that of any book that I recall on the spur of the instant, except the Gospel of St. John, but I think, when I say a book is readable and



pleasant, I mean as much as the writer who said it was 'a perfect book.' If, however, twenty-five years from now Mrs. Deland's 'Helena Richie' ranks, as you suggest, with Hawthorne's 'Scarlet Letter,' I shall be proven a very undiscerning critic.

"I did not say that the leading back of a bruised and sullied soul by the hand of a little child 'was not deep enough to make a serious impression.' I said (N. A. R., p. 550) that it was not deeply enough *felt* to make a serious impression—my whole plea being that while there is sin and suffering and anguish in the world we must beware lest we take them too lightly. I found myself somewhat shocked and at bay, that I had been able to read the book, dealing, as it does, with so serious a phase of evil, once to myself and once aloud, with perfect cheerfulness and even some merriment. I was struck by the fact that one could not have read 'Anna Karénina' and come out thus unscathed. Aristotle has told us that the function of tragedy is to purge the emotions by depicting scenes of terror and pity,—the book seemed to me too lightly done to effect this. But I am little concerned to prove my estimate of any given book just. The difference of opinion is very likely a difference in the habitual use of words. I am, however, very much concerned to refute your statement that an appeal against conventionality is an appeal for immorality.

I am, sir, etc.,

LOUISE COLLIER WILLCOX.

*"September the 23rd, 1906."*